

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926
WWW.AZAG.GOV

ANDREA M. ESQUER
PRESS SECRETARY
PHONE: (602)-542-8019
CELL PHONE: 602-725-2200

Terry Goddard Announces Agreement with Rite Aid to Reduce Illegal Sale of Tobacco to Minors

(Phoenix, Ariz. – September 9, 2004) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced an agreement with Rite Aid Corporation that will establish positive store policies and business practices aimed at reducing tobacco product sales to minors. Rite Aid is a national drug store chain that is opening stores in Arizona.

Rite Aid voluntarily entered an "Assurance of Voluntary Compliance" agreement with the Arizona Attorney General's Office, 20 other Attorneys General and the District of Columbia to show their support in reducing the number of young people who become addicted to tobacco products.

The Rite Aid agreement is the most recent accord produced by an ongoing, multi-state enforcement effort, seeking to secure similar agreements. Arizona has entered into similar arrangements with Walgreens, Wal-Mart, ExxonMobile, ARCO, British Petroleum and Amoco.

"Youth tobacco use is a serious issue in Arizona," Goddard said. "This is a great step in protecting Arizona youth, and I applaud Rite Aid for coming to the table. Together with other companies who have entered into this agreement, I am confident we can combat the rising number of youth smokers."

Under the agreement, Rite Aid must:

- Minimize the use of underage persons in sales positions that involve the sale of tobacco products.
- Train employees on state and local laws and internal company policies regarding tobacco sales to minors.
- Require its employees to check the ID of any person attempting to purchase tobacco when that person appears to be under the age of 27.
- Not sell candy, chewing gum or other items which are designed to look like cigarettes.
- Use cash registers programmed to prompt ID checks on all tobacco sales.

- Hire an independent entity to conduct random compliance checks over 10 percent of all Rite Aid stores in the participating states every six months.
- Prohibit self-service displays of cigarettes, chewing tobacco and snuff.

The Attorneys General have long recognized that youth access to tobacco products is one of the nation's most serious public health problems. Across the country, 2,000 teenagers begin smoking each day, one-third of which will ultimately die of a tobacco-related disease. In Arizona, nearly 21 percent of all smokers are under the age of 18.

The Tobacco Enforcement Unit of the Arizona Attorney's Office monitors the retailer compliance with Arizona laws regarding the sale of tobacco products. To report suspected violations of Arizona's youth tobacco laws, please call the Arizona Attorney General's Office Youth Tobacco Inspection Information and Referral Line at (602) 542-7747.

###